FILM FAN MONTHLY

INCLUDING "PROFILE"
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RALPH BELLAMY

We note, with great chagrin, a feature film omitted from our Leon Errol index last month: CAREER (RKO '39), starring Anne Shirley. And a short subject, GOOD MORNING, EVE (WB '34). The N.Y. Times is currently reprinting old Film Daily Yearbooks, superficially a laudable enterprise. But what is really needed is a volume or two correcting the errors and omissions in the Yearbooks which cause subsequent errors like our omission of CAREER. [This is not just sour grapes on our part, for after all, practically all film research stems from information provided in the Film Daily Yearbook]

Such a problem cannot present itself this month because, due entirely to space considerations, there is no index with our Ralph Bellamy interview. There is, however, a continuation of John Cocchi's index to the films of Johnny Mack Brown, along with our regular features. Thanks this month to Mr. Bellamy, Ed Leydon and Terry Liang of ABC, and Jerry Vermilye for their kindness.

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FFM Interviews RALPH BELLAMY

By

Leonard Maltin

On the stage for over forty years, veteran of nearly a hundred films, one of the pioneers of live television: the man's name is Ralph Bellamy, and to look at the imposing, vigorous actor you'd never guess he'd been through all that. At the age of 66, he is still doing what he loves best, acting, and he remains one of the finest practitioners of the craft. He is starring with Yvette Mimieux and George Maharis in a new series on ABC-Television this season, THE MOST DEADLY GAME, and it was during a break in shooting that we interviewed Mr. Bellamy.

FFM: Do you mind if we dig into the past a bit?
BELLAMY: Go ahead.
FFM: How did you come to make THE SECRET SIX, in 1931?
BELLAMY: I was in a play in New York which lasted two weeks, I believe, called Road Side. It was Lynn Riggs' first play--he, you know, wrote Green Grow the Lilacs, which became Oklahoma! The play didn't go, but I got five picture contract offers, and Arthur Hopkins asked me to accept the one from Joe Schenck, who was head of United Artists at the time. I did, although it wasn't the best contract. I came out here and right off the bat he loaned me to MGM. That cast was Clark Gable--that's the one on which he got his MGM contract--and the leading man was Johnny Mack Brown. Plus Harlow, Beery, Lew Stone, Marjorie Rambeau... I was a gangster.
FFM: Had you been playing heroes on Broadway?
BELLAMY: I hadn't done much on Broadway; I had only done two plays on Broadway up to that point. The bulk of my experience had been in stock--not what they call stock today, but real old stock companies. I had my own for a while. I played leads in stock, which meant you played a different play each week, ten performances--seven days a week, three matinees--of fairly current Broadway plays.
FFM: I suppose after that experience movie technique didn't faze you.
BELLAMY: It's a different kind of approach; each medium has its differences, but this is a big one. The transposition from the stage to the camera, when you first have it, is a rather awesome thing. You've got to reduce everything, or at least not treat it so broadly, as you have to do on the stage because of the gallery, the back of the house. You do just the opposite. It's a thing you have to get used to. Everybody was getting used to it at that time. At that time I heard for the first time a phrase I've heard many times since. I'd just come out, and I was dining at a restaurant which is no longer here on Hollywood Boulevard called Henry's, which was a popular place at the time. Gable came in, alone, and he said "What do you think of this thing out here?" and I said "I don't know yet." He said "I just finished a picture---I got $11,000 for playing a heavy in a Bill Boyd Western. Eleven thousand dollars! No actor is worth this. I got myself a room at the Castle Argyll, I bought myself a second-hand Ford, and I'm saving

every nickel I'm making, because this isn't going to last. I'm not going to buy anything you can't put on the Chief." That was the first time I'd heard that phrase--don't buy anything you can't put on the Chief.

FFM: So then you were loaned to Paramount for THE MAGNIFICENT LIE?

BELLAMY: No, I broke the contract with Joe Schenck, because he told me after he got me out here under contract, I had 30 weeks guaranteed out of 52, which allowed him to lay me off 22 weeks, which he did after THE SECRET SIX. He didn't think I was for pictures, so I said "Well, let me out of the contract." So that was freelance. I freelanced for a while, then I got a Fox contract, and worked there for a while.

FFM: They really kept you busy there.

BELLAMY: Oh yes. Spence Tracy was there then; we did two or three together. They wanted us both to stay on another year at the same salary and we both said no--we were in everything they were doing.

FFM: Do you remember another picture at MGM called WEST OF BROADWAY with John Gilbert?

BELLAMY: Yes. Sound had just come in, and all the studios had to refinance. Nobody was prepared financially for sound, and to get refinancing, MGM quickly signed a contract with Gilbert, who was their hot man then, for either three years at two million dollars or two years at three million dollars--I forget which; he told me this story--so that they could go to the banks and say "We've got John Gilbert, and we need X millions of dollars." They got the money, but when they put Jack under a microhpone, he came out with a thin, piping voice. It really wasn't too bad, but it wasn't good. Well, they did everything to try and get out of the contract with him. I remember he said to me, "I know what they're doing. They're giving me second-rate pictures"-which this one was--"but I've got such a contract that I'm going to do it. I'll clean out the spittoons and sweep the floors for the duration of the contract." Which he practically did. He was quite a guy; I liked him.

FFM: What was your part like in the picture?

BELLAMY: I was a ranch foreman, and he was the fellow from New York

With Ruth Chatterton in THE MAGNIFICENT LIE

With Ferdinand Munier and Barbara Stanwyck in FORBIDDEN

who owned the ranch. I had ridden back East; I learned at an Army base in an Army saddle, but I'd never been in a Western saddle. They said "Can you ride?" and I said "Yes." I'd done it, and I could. But the first shot with Jack was coming in from making the rounds of the ranch, the two of us riding. I had a ten gallon hat, boots, and everything. We were to ride through the gate, up to the hitching post, and dismount--a silent shot. So the director, Harry Beaumont, said "Go out around the corner there, and when we call you, come in at a fair pace, tie your horses up and leave." So we went out, and we were on the side of the hill. I had never neck-reigned a horse, and I couldn't turn the horse around. Jack was dying laughing. Suddenly, I kicked this horse around, got it facing practically downhill, and in the distance--they used those loud, big clappers--the horses, which were picture horses, had heard the director, knew what they were supposed to do, and the next thing I knew, I was coming through the gate with both hands on the pummel, my hat off, my hair flowing in the breeze, feet out of the stirrups--the horse came up to the hitching post and stopped dead. Jack was fifty yards behind me, and everybody was dying laughing. They printed it, and I saw it on the screen.

FFM: Do you recall another early picture called FORBIDDEN?

BELLAMY: Well, that was Capra's first big picture, and Stanwyck's first big picture--that was at Columbia. Columbia--that opens up some stories. I have some firsts over there. I didn't have an agent at that time, and in Harry Cohn's office, he and Sam Briskin, who was his right-hand man, literally had me backed into a corner, pointing fingers at me, to talk about this deal. I didn't even know enough to be flattered about it; I thought this was the way they behaved. Anyway, we had a handshake deal for me to do these pictures. I went home and Dan Kelly, who was then the casting director at Columbia, called and said "Mr. Cohn says if you're going to do that picture with Capra and Barbara Stanwyck, you've got to do one first with Fay Wray." I said "Well, it's possible, let me see the script." So they sent me the script, I read it, they called and said "What about it?" I said "The one with

Fay Wray is a very physical, strenuous thing; go to sea for a week--water, lifting people, going under water in barrels--and it finishes the day before the one with Stanwyck starts, and I'm in every scene with Stanwyck"--this was before the Screen Actors Guild--"I would have to have a stand-in." So Kelly said "We've never had a stand-in on the Columbia lot." I said "I will have to, and I would think anybody would have to, to do those two pictures back to back." He said "I'll call you back." He did, and said "Mr. Cohn wants to see you." I went to the office, and he said "What the hell is this, you New York actors coming out here. Stand-in! We never had a stand-in on the Columbia lot, and we never will have." I said "I'm not pressing anything, I'm just telling you that I couldn't do justice to you, the part, myself, or any body concerned, without a stand-in." So we batted this around, and I dind't know Harry very well at that time, and I finally said "Well, Mr. Cohn, why don't we just forget both pictures, and maybe some time later on we can find something we can do together." Which you weren't supposed to say to Harry Cohn. We talked a few minutes more, and he said "You can have a stand-in on one condition: don't tell Jack Holt!" I said "I don't even know Jack Holt, and if I met him, I don't think I'd say 'I have a stand-in and you haven't.'" He said "Don't give me any of that, get out of my office and do the two pictures." I did, and I wound up under contract to him. Then, like at Fox, I was in everything they did. In those days, again before the Screen Actors Guild, we worked what they were pleased to call six days a week, but it really was seven. You'd come to work Saturday morning, the usual time, and work all day, all night, through the night, until the leading lady fainted Sunday noon, or some catastrophe started. Now, some of my friends were arbitrarily stopping work at 6:00. I thought, "If anybody has a right to do this, I have." So each afternoon around 5:30, I would say to the assistant director, "Don't let the director get into a set-up that includes me after six, because I'm not going to be here." This went on for about a week, and a boy came on the set one day with a note: "Stop in my office today when you finish work - Harry Cohn." By now, I knew him pretty well, and I must say I got on with Harry, I liked him for what he was. He said "What the hell is this walking off a set? Something new, isn't it?" I said "I don't walk off a set;I walk on every morning, on practically every set you have here, I've been doing it for a long time, and I believe that if that's the way it's going to be, I have to have that amount of rest." He said "You're under contract to me, you'll do what I tell you." I said "Harry, I can't do it. If that's the way you feel about it, let's tear up the contract." Which again, you weren't supposed to say. So we talked some more, it got pretty rough, and finally he said "All right, you can quit at 6:00, on one condition: don't tell Jack Holt!"

FFM: What was Frank Capra like as a dire tor?

BELLAMY: Just great, just wonderful, He was flexible, and gentle, and perceptive. He used what you had, as any good director does. He knew how to get the greatest degree of what you had to offer, providing what was called for in the script. That's a picture that might stand up today.

FFM: Barbara Stanwyck is terribly good in those Columbia pictures.

BELLAMY: Barbara Stanwyck is terribly good in anything. And it's easy to explain: it's absolute simplicity, and complete honesty. There isn't a phony note there.

FFM: I'd like to know more about some of the things you did at Fox...

BELLAMY: That one picture you mentioned, SURRENDER, we started on the old Western Avenue lot, and they were completing the Fox hills. We shot the first half on Western Avenue, and moved over and used the new studio for the second half. I guess we might have been the first ones to use the new studio.

FFM: What was it like to play a scene with Spencer Tracy?

BELLAMY: Just great. This was real acting. Neither one of us held, or as far as I'm concerned still hold, with the theories of the Method, or any of the procedures or patterns that are dealt to young aspiring actors. There is no definition of acting. No one can say what acting is, and no one can teach you to act. I dare say you can be helped by joining some other people and doing things together, but acting is the

With Katharine Hepburn in SPITFIRE

result of first an urge, then a knack, and hopefully a talent, and an awful lot of experience.

FFM: We now come to AIR MAIL, certainly one of your best films, directed by John Ford. One great asset is its feeling of authenticity: was it shot an an actual air field?

BELLAMY: It sure was. We went up to Bishop, California for that; the airplane expert was Paul Mantz, and a fellow working for him was Jimmy James. Jimmy James was one of the nine remaining 45 mail pilots; they were a colorful, roustabout lot. Wonderful people, but crazy. We had a scene in which Pat O'Brien was supposed to be flying in to our airport, and his reputation had preceded him as being a wild sort of uncontrollable kind of guy. The scene called for a one-man circus up in the air, and then a 10,000 foot dive through a one-ship hangar, leveling out and landing. Well, this meant that Jimmy James, who was doubling for Pat in the airplane, would have to fly upside down in an open-cockpit plane, do barrels, outside loops, inside loops, everything they knew in those days, and then this 10,000 foot dive. Well, up at Bishop, which is high mountain area, the weather was unpredictable, and we always had it on the schedule to do if the weather were right, but it would be windy, or up-and-down drafts, and they'd say "Not today." One morning we got out there about 7:00, and Ford said "Where's Jimmy?" Somebody said "We haven't seen him, but he probably won't be here, because he was up all night shooting craps, drinking." All of a sudden, off in the distance goes Jimmy James in his plane. This was a particularly bad day, with up-and-down drafts. We tried to signal him from the ground to come down, but he paid no attention. Then he started an ascent, and went to 10,000 feet. We couldn't stop him, so finally Jack said "Get the camera set up; if he's going to do it, I guess we'll have to take it." He said to me "This weather is so wild, why don't you go out about 30 feet in front of the hangar, mark center, and start flagging him down?" At the same time, I'd be marking center for Jimmy. So he started this dive, and I'm 30 feet in front of this hangar waving a flag, and he's aiming right at me! I suddenly realized "Where am I go-

ing to go?" I never ate so much dust in my life; I suddenly fell to the ground, threw the flag away, and he did it.
FFM: Another good picture around this time was PICTURE SNATCHER, with James Cagney, in which you played a drunken city editor.
BELLAMY: As a matter of fact, we met on that picture. It had two distinctions: he was the only man I ever hit, and it was the only time he ever got hit hard enough to have a lasting effect. I had to hit him, some place in the story. The usual trick, as you know, is to put the camera over the shoulder of the person who's throwing the blow; you throw the fist past the chin--it doesn't matter what distance, as long as it covers the chin and passes it--when they put a blow in, and the fellow who's receiving the punch snaps his head, it looks as if he's hit. Jimmy said to me "Aim at my face, I'll get out of the way." He was a boxer. I said "I don't want to do that." He said "It's my fault if anything goes wrong; I'll get out of the way. Aim at my chin." So I did, he didn't get out of the way, and it broke a tooth. I guess a lot of people have been in fights--I never had been, never had hit anybody in my life. I remember it now graphically, and I think it hurt me more than it did him. He's wound up my closest friend, over all these years.
FFM: What are your memories of SPITFIRE?
BELLAMY: Why don't we just drop that? I did it for no reason except I loved Katie Hepburn. Well, I can tell you one good story there. Katie was about to do a play in New York called The Lake, with Jed Harris. She actually wanted me to do it with her, but I decided not to. This was during the time of shooting SPITFIRE. It came to the last scene, and she was to go to New York to start rehearsals with Jed Harris the next day; another good friend of mine, John Cromwell, was directing. We'd finished rehearsing this last scene, which we couldn't do the picture without, and she said "Now John, before we start to shoot this, I want to bring up a point. We're a day over schedule, and when I made this contract, everybody being aware of the fact that I had to be in New York in rehearsal on such-and-such a day, there's a penalty clause in here of $10,000 a day over. It's a day over, and before we shoot this, I'd like to have the $10,000." In fifteen minutes, Myron Selznick, her agent, Pandro Berman, who was running the studio, everybody in town was on that set. Katie said "I'll be in my dressing room. When you get ready with the check, come see me." Not too much time went by, back came Katie in a gingham dress. John Cromwell said "OK, let's rehearse it once more." We got out in front of the camera, and Kate put her hand in the pocket of her gingham dress and said "There's the check."
FFM: Among the other distinctions in your career, you worked with Anna Sten in THE WEDDING NIGHT. Samuel Goldwyn was very much involved in the production of that film, wasn't he?
BELLAMY: He sure was. I remember, this was a story about Connecticut tobacco fields, and Polish people. She was Polish, and I was. I forget how Gary Cooper got into it, but everything was all right until Gary came along... I don't remember the story very well, but the point was made that this was an isolated ethnic group which stayed with their language, stayed with their customs, their dances and everything. I had to learn Polish dances; I can't even foxtrot but I had to learn Polish dances. So I was playing it as indicated in the script, and then Goldwyn came on the set, just before we were going to do a long take. When we finished it, King Vidor and Goldwyn had a long conference and Goldwyn left the stage. Vidor came up to me and said "You, I guess, have upset Mr. Goldwyn." I said "Why?" He said that Goldwyn said, "Vy is Bellamy playing it vit an accent?"
FFM: Working at Columbia, in the midst of all these P pictures, you did THE AWFUL TRUTH, which was one of your all-time best films.
BELLAMY: Oh, that was wonderful. One day I was telephoned at home by Dan Kelly, and he said "Mr. Cohn is sending a script over called THE AWFUL TRUTH. He wants you to read the script and look at the part of so-and-so, which was written for Roland Young. Don't pay any attention to it, because it isn't going to be that kind of a part." I said "Well why are you sending it over, and why am I supposed to read it, if I'm not supposed to pay any attention to it?" He said "I don't know,

With Cary Grant and Irene Dunne in THE AWFUL TRUTH

that's the message Mr. Cohn gave me." I read it, and it was a pretty funny script--it was from a stage play, as you know. Then I was called and asked to go to Cohn's office. He said "What do you think of the script?" I said "I think it's a very good script for Roland Young." He said "Never mind, it's not going to be that kind of part." I said "What's it going to be? Why did I read it?" He said "Just to get your reaction." I said "Well, you've got it." That was the end of that; I'd forgotten about it, and one day I got a call from Mary McCall Jr., a writer, and she said "We're good friends; would you do something for me? Come over to my office. I've got THE AWFUL TRUTH here, and I'm supposed to make a character out of the part that was written for Roland Young, and tailor it for you." I said "Sure, I'll come over." And she said "What do you think it should be? I said "I think it's fine the way it is, and I think Roland Young would be just great in it." She said "But I'm supposed to make him Western. We talked about this a bit, and we had the damndest thing arranged. I think I in a New York hotel came down a fire escape into a window, and that was my entrance; she wrote it, and we thought we'd had a good afternoon. Then I was at somebody's house, a cocktail party, and Dwight Taylor saw me, and said "Oh, we're going to be working together." I said "Yeah? On what?" He said "THE AWFUL TRUTH." I said "Are you collaborating with Mary McCall?" He said "No, she hasn't anything to do with it; I was given the script. It's going to be great, I've got a great part for you." I said "What is it?" He said "I'm not going to talk about it." So weeks go by, and I meet Dorothy Parker and Alan Campbell. They said "Isn't it wonderful, we're going to be together." I said "On what?" She said "THE AWFUL TRUTH." I said "Oh, I didn't know that. What happened to Dwight Taylor?" She said "We don't know anything about Dwight Taylor. Harry Cohn sent us the script. And we've got a beautiful part in it for you." But they wouldn't talk about it. So, time went on, and Dan Kelly called, and said "Report to the studio Monday morning to do THE AWFUL TRUTH." I said "To play what? Where's the script?" He said "I don't know, I guess they'll get it to you." I said "Who else

is in it?" He said "Cary Grant and Irene Dunne." So I tried to get Harry, and I got him the Friday before, and said "I've got to talk to you about this. What am I playing?" He said "Just leave it to Leo Mc Carey. Leo McCarey is a great director, and we're going to be all right. I'm not going to tell you anything." I said "How am I going to play a part if I don't know anything about it?" He said it would be a Westerner, from Oklahoma. I said "That's not much of a lead....Would you mind if I go and see Leo?" He said "Go ahead." So I called Leo at his house. Did you know Leo? He always had a big grin, and those bouncing eyes. I went out to his house, and I said "I want to talk to you about THE AWFUL TRUTH." He said "It's gonna be great!" I said "But what's the part?" He said "Oh, don't worry, don't worry." It all seemed so indefinite, and nebulous. So then this call came to show up Monday morning, and I said "What kind of clothes?" They said "Just bring a lot of clothes." I was being nasty, I got made up, and all the clothes I could carry I brought onto the set. Leo came over, said hello. I said "Leo, I don't know what the part is, I don't know how to dress it, I was told to bring a lot of clothes, so I've got a lot of clothes." He said "What have you got on?" I said "Odd jacket and trousers." He said "Let me see it---just the thing!" It was just the way I came to the studio. He said "Come over here," so I went over, and he had Irene sitting at a piano in front of the camera, and she was saying "Leo, I can't, you can't ask me to do this." Irene and I said hello, and Leo said "Can you sing?" I said "I can't get from one note to the next." He laughed, "That's exactly what I want!" He said "You're an Oklahoman." I said "What kind of Oklahoman?" He said "Just be an Oklahoman for the moment, I'll tell you about the rest of it later. Do you know 'Home on the Range'?" I said "I know the words, but I can't sing it." He said "It's perfect! Irene, do you think you could do it?" She said "You know I don't read music very well," and Leo thought this was funny. The camera was all set up, and Leo said "Let's try one." The camera's running, she's playing "Home on the Range," and I'm singing it, and it's just awful. We finished, there's noplace else to go, and nobody said "Cut." We finally looked up, and McCarey was doubled up under the camera. He said "That's it! cut, print it." Irene and I didn't know what the hell we were doing. She was mad, I had no idea what the part was. Cary came in, did a scene, and he was put off. At the end of the day, Irene was in tears, Cary went to Harry Cohn and said "I'll make you one of two propositions. Either let me play Bellamy's part as it is written for Poland Young, or let me out of this, and I'll do another picture for you for nothing." I didn't know where I was. No script at all. Next morning, McCarey came in, and he had a piece of paper a few inches long: he said "I've got something here I think would be very funny. You come in here, and you come in over there...and then we'll see what happens." So there we are coming in doors, and the dog is running through, and everything. And he's chuckling gleefully. Well, a couple of days later we saw what was happening. We shot that in less than six weeks, without a script. Leo knew all the time what he was going to do, but he was the only one who did. After a couple of days, we were willing to be putty in his hands.

FFM: I guess you played your part too well, because it typecast you for a while, didn't it?

BELLAMY: It was one of those things: I guess there hadn't been anything written for that type of character for a while.

FFM: HIS GIRL FRIDAY comes to mind right away. How did that line describing your character as a Ralph Bellamy type come about?

BELLAMY: I was off one day, and I came on the lot to say hello, because we were having a good time on that. I ran into my friend, by now, Harry Cohn, and he said "Let's go see the rushes in my projection room." I went up to his private projection room, and we saw the previous day's rushes; I hadn't been in them. The scene you're talking about I think is where they've sent someone to pick me up and get me in some kind of trouble, and Cary says "He'll be in front of a building and he'll probably have a raincoat and umbrella." The guy says "What does he look like?" and Cary says "Sort of ordinary looking, like that guy in pictures, Ralph Bellamy." When this came out, Harry said "What

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A company called Entertainment Enterprises, headed by Irwin Lesser, has arranged to reissue 65 MGM pictures, dating from 1930 to 1965; the sixty five titles will go out as a package "festival" to theaters around the country. Titles include THE GUARDSMAN (1931) with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, AS YOU DESIRE ME (1932) with Greta Garbo, and such relatively new titles as THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN (1964). More details will appear in the next FFM.....Meanwhile, MGM itself is packaging a Children's Matinee series that includes THE WIZARD OF OZ, the yet-unreleased Chuck Jones animated feature THE PHANTOM TOLLBOTH, THE YEARLING, several LASSIE films, 1950s and 60s titles like TOM THUMB, and---best of all---the original Johnny Weissmuller TARZAN series. Now is the time to bug your local theater-owners to book these films!

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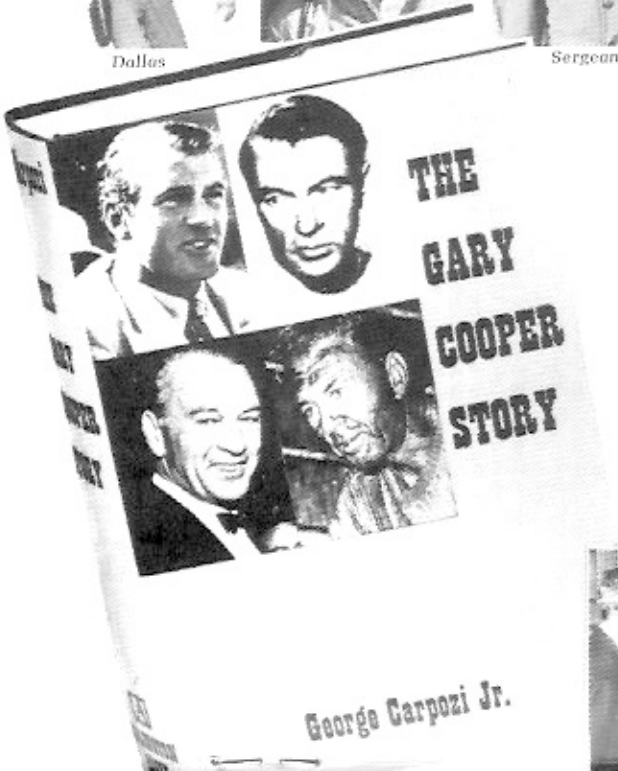

Coop's Life Story

Left: Coop and wife Rocky at the interview microphone, at the premiere of The Fountainhead.

Right: Cooper relaxing before the opening curtain at the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Holly-

Wells Ballet, Holly-
wood, 1957.

Think back to the glories of *A Farewell to Arms*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Sergeant York*, *Pride of the Yankees*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *High Noon*. One heroic figure stands out — a tall, gaunt, shy champion of the just and the good. The man who played this role so well was only playing himself.

For left: Cooper with his mother.

Center: Shown with actress Patricia Neal.

Right: Gary at the age of sixteen (1917).

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With Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell in HIS GIRL FRIDAY

the hell are they doing down on the set? This wasn't in the script!"
FFM: One of the notable things about that picture is the frantic pace of the dialogue. Did that require a lot of rehearsal?
BELLAMY: We all had worked together before. But you had to take the cue, instead of from the last word, from two or three words before the last word of the speech. Just a matter of concentration. It was a pretty good picture, as I remember it.
FFM: How about TRADE WINDS?
BELLAMY: That was shot entirely against background plates. Tay Garnett had gone around the world on his yacht, and shot plates. Freddy March, Joan Bennett, Ann Sothern, and I did almost the entire picture against background plates of Siam, and Singapore. Incidentally, Freddy told me he took a percentage on that picture--it cost nothing to make--and he said of everything he did in Hollywood, he made more on that. That was one of the few times, when the picture was over, I got a note from Walter Wanger saying "Nice to have worked with you." He could have done it by phone, or on the set, and I don't think it had ever happened to me before; I thought it was quite nice.
FFM: Although you've done a lot of films, many people identify you most closely with the short-lived ELLERY QUEEN series.
BELLAMY: Yes, that's very strange. I think I did four, and everybody calls it the Ellery Queen series. They were just inexpensive pictures, overseen by the two fellows who wrote the stories, so there would be some accuracy, technically.
FFM: Then at Universal you broke new ground by doing some horror movies.
BELLAMY: I did one that involves my favorite story. Whatever it was, everybody on the lot was in it--the Frankenstein monster, and the wolfman--and also everybody in town was in it. We finished a scene one day on the set, and I can't remember the name of the director, a little fellow who wore riding britches, a puttee, a scarf, and had a megaphone almost as big as he was. We finished a scene, and he said to Cedric Hardwicke and me, "We have to go down to the backlot for a staircase,

to shoot a silent shot. Why don't you sit here and relax?" So Cedric and I had a pleasant hour, two hours, and finally decided to go down and see how they were doing. There was a lot of hollering and running around, and the assistant director finally went to this little director and said "We're ready." He picked up the megaphone, and almost bumped the assistant as he turned it around. He said "Get Evelyn Ankers at the top of the stairway." It was just a silent shot, to let the audience know the geography, that they're downstairs now instead of upstairs. Now it's quiet, they've got Evelyn Ankers at the top of the stairway. He starts to pace back and forth, with the megaphone, and he says, "Now Evelyn, you're all alone in this dim, dark, dank, dingy, ancient, oozing, slimy castle, at four o'clock in the morning. Your mother's been carried off by the Frankenstein monster, your father's been killed by the wolfman, the servants have fled, your lover is being chased across the moors by the dogs. I want to get the feeling from you as you come down this stairway that you're fed up with it all!" Anytime Cedric and I saw each other anywhere in the world, and it was a lot of places, across a room we'd say "You fed up with it all?"

FFM: Why did you leave Hollywood in the mid-1940s?

BELLAMY: To go to New York to do the play that won the Pulitzer Prize, State of the Union.

FFM: Weren't you fed up with it all?

BELLAMY: No, I went before that. I know what you're talking about, when I was sitting in Mark Hellinger's office and saw this script: "A charming but naive fellow from the West, a tpyical Ralph Bellamy part." That's when I made up my mind to go East. That was before I did Tomorrow the World.

FFM: Then you did a lot of stage work, and hardly any films, until SUNRISE AT CAMPOBELLO, which I guess you've talked about to death.

BELLAMY: Yeah, and everybody's read about it to death, too.

FFM: And after that, nothing until THE PROFESSIONALS.

BELLAMY: That's right. I've never seen it, accidentally. I understand it's good.

FFM: More recently, you did a very fine film, ROSEMARY'S BABY.

With Margaret Lindsay and Ann Doran in
ELLERY QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE MYSTERY

With Ruth Gordon in ROSEMARY'S BABY

BELLAMY: That was a good picture. I thought it was excellent, of its kind.
FFM: And Roman Polanski?
BELLAMY: Just great. A strange little fellow, but extremely talented. Then I've just done DOCTORS' WIVES, for Columbia, which we shot up near San Diego.
FFM: Which brings us to your newest project, THE MOST DEADLY GAME, a new series on ABC. What kind of role do you have?
BELLAMY: It's about three people. The fellow I'm doing is an older fellow, interested in criminology, who is united with two other people, played by George Maharis and Yvette Mimieux, who share his interest. for various reasons. And out of this a relationship has begun. My fellow's interest is more in the psychological level--what causes a person to commit a murder. The resolving of it is basically up to the other two, but they work together and solve it. I hope that sometimes we will be unsuccessful, to make it believable. The ingredients are all there, so it seems to be up to us to pull it off.
FFM: You did one of the first major TV series, in 1949, didn't you?
BELLAMY: Five firsts, as a matter of fact: it was the first live half hour dramatic weekly network show on the air, MAN AGAINST CRIME. It got the first award given by what became the Emmy Awards. This is my fourth series. I did ELEVENTH HOUR for a year, and last year, I guess everybody will forget, I did THE SURVIVORS.
FFM: Does one medium give you particular pleasure more than others?
BELLAMY: The stage. Anybody who'd done all of it will say that, if they're honest. The difference is the audience. The audience is like meeting a new person, with a collective personality, every night.
FFM: Do you have a favorite of all your film roles?
BELLAMY: Well, it has to be F.D.R., even though the picture wasn't successful; but I can't separate the picture from the play, which was our trouble with the picture, really. I knew the Roosevelt family, all but Anna and John, all through the White House period. I did a lot of extensive work with Mrs. Roosevelt before we went into rehear-

With Greer Garson in SUNRISE AND CAMPOBELLO

sal, and at the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled, where F.D.R. got his braces and wheelchair. Then, in an effort not to do what at best could be called a good nightclub trick, an imitation of F.D.R., I learned his speech pattern with a voice coach, then threw it away. There were only a half a dozen places in the play when I would strive an exact imitation. For the rest of it, he had what was very helpful to an actor, a cadence. When he spoke, he would speak a phrase; he would never break a phrase, which was a very helpful thing. I certainly used his mannerisms, but I was not trying to do an exact duplication of F.D.R., and I didn't, the point being that he having been so recently among us, a lot of people at that time still had a vivid mental image of him. If I could appeal to each individual mental image, enough to keep it alive, that would be the greatest I could achieve... much better than trying to play the whole thing as a nightclub impersonation.

FFM: And it remains your favorite role.

BELLAMY: Sure. Jimmy Roosevelt gave me this ring; it's an exact duplicate of F.D.R.'s ring, given to his father by his mother in 1850. He had it on in every picture you ever saw of him. Jimmy just wrote me and said "Would you consider seeing that sometime in the future the ring gets to the collection of memorabilia at Warm Springs?" I said "If you want to wait a long time, I'm going to be around a while: it'll be 35 years or so, but I'll see that you get it."

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ODDS AND ENDS

Film buffs have to put up with a lot of incompetency on the part of movie studios and uninformed Johnny-come-latelies who are cashing in on the old-movie boom. Latest example: a certain film company, long known for its ignorance, is now programming film series for a New York museum. Their latest series is called "Great Westerns," and the final title in the program is THIS GUN FOR HIRE.....In response to the nationwide Mickey Mouse renaissance, the Disney company is playing an old MM cartoon, KLONDIKE MICKEY, with their new release THE BOATNIKS.

The Films of Johnny Mack Brown

PART TWO

By John Cocchi

[Several corrections for what has appeared so far: in #2, the 1916 version of THE BUGLE CALL starred William Collier Jr., not Sr. #18 should have noted that Johnny sang the Levant-Clare song "Someone." And in #22 the name of Johnny's character was Berk Jarvis. The first film listed below, just discovered in research, was released in July, 1931, but for reasons of expediency, will be numbered to follow the last film listed in FFM #109-110]

29. HOLLYWOOD HALFBACKS - Univ 7/31 - Charles Lamont - Mary Brian, Nick Stuart, Monty Collins, Raymond Hatton, Joe Bonomo, Arthur Lake, Marjorie White, Betty Compson, Bryant Washburn, Franklin Pangborn, Florence Lake, Albert Conti, Vernon Dent, others. One of the Thalians series of short comedies, produced by the California based actors' club for Universal release. Two reels
30. VANISHING FRONTIER - Para 7/29/32 - Phil Rosen - Evalyn Knapp, ZaSu Pitts, J. Farrell MacDonald, Raymond Hatton, Wallace MacDonald, Ben Alexander, George Irving, Joyzelle Joyner, Deacon McDaniels. Johnny's last pre-series Western dealt with the passing of California's control from Mexican into American hands. As Kirby Tornell, he helps the Spanish leaders end military rule and bring about civil law. 70 minutes
31. 70,000 WITNESSES - Para 9/2/32 - Ralph Murphy - Phillips Holmes, Dorothy Jordan, Charles Ruggles, J. Farrell MacDonald, Lew Cody, David Landau, Kenneth Thomson, Big Boy Williams, George Rosener, Walter Hiers, Reed Howes, Francis McDonald, Dave O'Brien. From the novel by Cortland Fitzsimmons. Walter Clark (Johnny) is State's star football player in this unusual mystery. During the big game, he makes a touchdown, becomes dizzy after a tackle, and later dies. McKenna (Landau) investigates, finds players Southard (Howes) and Connors (Williams) suspect. The game is replayed with Buck Buchan (Holmes) who loves Walter's sister Dorothy (Jordan);he fills in for the dead player. Doc Collins (Thomson), it seems, had put nitroglycerin in the rubbing alcohol on the orders of Buck's gambler-brother Slip (Cody), and the strain on his heart killed Walter. 72m
32. MALAY NIGHTS - Mayfair 11/1/32 - E. Mason Hopper - Dorothy Burgess, Ralph Ince, Carmelita Geraghty, George Smith, Lionel Belmore, Mary Jane, Raymond Hatton. An adventure story which was, according to Variety, "Slow moving" and "should have been better with the players involved." 62 minutes
33. FIGHTING WITH KIT CARSON - Mascot 7/6/33 - Armand Schaefer and Colbert Clark - Noah Beery Sr., Noah Beery Jr., Tully Marshall, Betsy King Ross, Robert Warwick, Edmund Breese, Edward Hearn, Lafe McKee, Ernie Adams, Lane Chandler, Reed Howes, Alan Bridge, Jack Mower, Mastyn Williams. 12 episodes; released as a feature, THE RETURN OF KIT CARSON, in 1947 by Albert Dezel Productions. In his first serial, Johnny appeared in the highly imaginary adventures of Indian Scout Kit Carson, and was aided immeasurably by villain Noah Beery, and abetted by son Noah Jr. Tully Marshall repeated his portrayal of fellow scout Jim Bridger, having appeared in that role in THE COVERED WAGON (1923) and FIGHTING CARAVANS (1931). 20m.each
34. SATURDAY'S MILLIONS - Univ 10/9/33 - Edward Sedgwick - Leila Hyams, Robert Young, Grant Mitchell, Andy Devine, Mary Carlisle, Richard Tucker, Joe Sawyer, Lucille Lund, Walter Brennan. The Lucian Cary story was then current in the Saturday Evening Post. As Allan, Johnny was a teammate of heel Young at a midwestern college. In

the surprise finale, Young doesn't win the big football game, and remains a heel. 77 minutes

35. FEMALE - 1st Nat 11/11/33 - Michael Curtiz - Ruth Chatterton, George Brent, Laura Hope Crews, Lois Wilson, Gavin Gordon, Edmund Breese, Larry Steers, Milton Kibbee, Charley Grapewin, Jean Muir. As Cooper, Johnny was invited by the head of Drake Motor Company (Chatterton) to her home to see if her charms could affect him. Neither he nor Gordon is able to overcome the efficient business-woman facade. Next morning, they attempt love-making, but are sent to branch offices. 60 minutes

36. SON OF A SAILOR - 1st Nat 12/23/33 - Lloyd Bacon - Joe E. Brown, Jean Muir, Frank McHugh, Thelma Todd, Sheila Terry, George Blackwood, Merna Kennedy, Samuel Hinds, Noel Francis, Walter Miller, Henry O'Neill. A service comedy, filmed in part aboard the USS Saratoga. Johnny was Chief Petty Officer Duke, a cultured gent whose fiancee (Muir) runs over loudmouth "lady-killer" Handsome (Joe E.). Helen, the daughter of a retired admiral, had given Duke a pair of baby shoes as a joke, and Handsome takes them. Spies also get mixed up in the proceedings. Originally SONS OF THE GODS. 73 min.

37. CROSS STREETS - Chesterfield/Invincible 1/22/34 - Frank R.Strayer - Claire Windsor, Anita Louise, Kenneth Thomson, Matty Kemp, Josef Swickard, Niles Welch. Heavy going as Adam Blythe (Brown) graduates Medical School with honors, is jilted by Anne (Windsor) for rich Dr. Clement (Welch), takes to drink, and becomes a tramp. 18 years later, an old pal brings him back during commencement and touts him as a great foreign surgeon. Adam falls for Anne's daughter Clare (Louise), but Anne finds she still loves him. The jealous Clement shoots Adam, who--with unbelievable self-sacrifice---makes his own death appear to be a suicide. 67 minutes

38. HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE #B-7 - Para 2/2/34 - Willy Pogany, Harry Green, Bebe Daniels, Mary Pickford, John Boles, William (Buster) Collier Jr., Robert Woolsey, the Wampas Baby Stars of 1933: Ruth Hall, Patricia Ellis, Lillian Bond, Boots Mallory, Evalyn Knapp, Dorothy Layton, Dorothy Wilson, Mary Carlisle, Marion Shockley, Toshia Mori Gloria Stuart, Eleanor Holm, Ginger Rogers, Lona Andre. A one-reel short. Johnny, in a picture frame in Pogany's studio, ogles model Miss Hollywood. Then he introduces 1933 Wampas Baby Stars so that Pogany may use their best features for a painting of the perfect girl.

39. THREE ON A HONEYMOON - Fox 3/23/34 - James Tinling - Sally Eilers, Charles Starrett, ZaSu Pitts, Henrietta Crosman, Irene Hervey, Howard Lally, Russell Simpson, Cornelius Keefe, Wini Shaw, Elsie Larson. From Isabel Ross' novel Promenade Deck. Set on a Mediterranean cruise ship, this sort of Grand-Hotel-at-sea starred two actors who would become prominent Western players the next year, Brown and Starrett. Johnny was Chuck Wells, honeymooning with bride Millicent (Hervey), not knowing she's being blackmailed by old flame Keefe. Hervey turns to ex-classmate Eilers for help. 65m

40. ST. LOUIS WOMAN - Showmen 4/15/34 - Al Ray - Jeanette Loff, Farle Foxe, Roberta Gale. Songs by Betty Laidlaw and Bob Lively. A college football star (Brown) is expelled for breaking training; because of ethics, he refuses to play pro ball. Loff, finding him on a breadline, helps him to get back on his feet and they decide to marry. Then a madame tells Johnny's parents about the girl's shady past. Loff reinstates Johnny in college, and returns to her ex-husband, manager of a nightclub and a professional football team. Johnny returns to his patient schoolgirl sweetheart. The Film Daily described this as "an unexpected and rather aggravating conclusion." 68 minutes

41. MARRYING WIDOWS - Tower '34 - Sam Newfield - Judith Allen, Minna Gombell, Lucien Littlefield, George Grandee, Sarah Padden, Bert Roach, Charles King, Virginia Sale, Syd Saylor, Gladys Blake. An opportunist, Johnny weds widowed Judith for her money. Her brother in law reveals that she relinquished her inheritance, and it remains for press agent Gombell to reunite the ill-assorted pair. 67m

[Continued in the next issue]

BOOK REVIEWS

SEE NO EVIL By Jack Vizzard
381 pages, $6.95 Simon and Schuster

This is one of the most informative and revealing books ever written on a single aspect of Hollywood: an inside look at the Production Code office, from the late 1930s to the present day. Told in an autobiographical style by Vizzard, a young man studying for priesthood who decided to go to Hollywood and conquer sin first-hand, SEE NO EVIL is often hilariously funny. It also explodes several widely-believed myths, such as the one that the Code forbade showing a man and wife together in bed. The fact is that British censors would not pass such scenes, and rather than re-shoot sequences for the British market, most Hollywood studios decided it would be easier to adopt the double-bed standard in their films. SEE NO EVIL is highly recommended reading.

LOST FILMS By Gary Carey
91 pages, $4.95, paperback, illustrated Museum of Modern Art

In this beautifully printed softcover volume, Gary Carey provides brief comments and facts about 30 silent films which are generally acknwoledged to be lost. It is sad to realize that in all likelihood these films (representing everyone from Lon Chaney to Josef von Sternberg) will never be seen again. But at least some still photos have survived, and with them, LOST FILMS provides a fascinating glimpse of what these long-forgotten films were like.

THE FILMGOER'S COMPANION By Leslie Halliwell
1072 pages, $15.00 Hill and Wang

This expanded, revised edition of THE FILMGOER'S COMPANION is, like its predecessors, a handy, useful guide to films, filmmakers, and sundry subjects covered over the years in movies. No one has yet produced a thorough film encyclopedia, and until then, books like this serve a definite function. There appear to be few errors in the COMPANION, but a fourth edition might rectify some omissions--both subjects worthy of inclusion, and facts within certain entries.

D.W. GRIFFITH: THE YEARS AT BIOGRAPH By Robert M. Henderson
250 pages, illustrated, $7.50 Farrar Straus and Giroux

Surprisingly little has been written about D.W. Griffith, the acknowledged pioneer of American cinema. Author Henderson has sought to help fill this gap by confining himself to one section of Griffith's career, and covering it in depth. The result is a lively, meticulously researched volume about Griffith's background, and his gradual evolution into the great artist he became. Not pedantic or wordy, as many histories of early film tend to be, Henderson's clear, concise style makes reading THE YEARS AT BIOGRAPH a pleasure.

FILM NOTES Edited by Eileen Bowser
128 pages, paperback, $5.00 Museum of Modern Art

Over the years, the Museum of Modern Art has provided some of the most cogent analyses of films in their program notes. Now, critiques of nearly 200 films in the Museum's circulating collection are gathered in this excellent spiral-bound book. Written by Iris Barry, Eileen Bowser, Gary Carey, Alistair Cooke, Richard Griffith, and Arthur Knight, the films covered range from THE LONEDALE OPERATOR to LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER. Not intended to be definitive discussions, the write-ups are designed, in the words of the late Miss Barry, "in part as a guide and in part as a stimulant." Both functions are well served.

Fans of horror films and tales of the supernatural will enjoy reading BEWARE THE BEASTS (McFadden-Bartell, 75¢), edited by Vic Ghidalia and Roger Elwood. It contains short stories by Kipling, Lovecraft, Poe,etc

DAVY ON 16 MM

If you are a film collector, you no doubt know that inflation is no longer "creeping," but is GALLOPING---and galloping faster than Rocky Lane's quarter horse ever did in any of his Republic Westerns! Judging by some of the film lists I've scanned from collectors of late, a few seem to feel that ANY old film is worth a minimum of $39, regardless of condition,while the better or more desirable black-and-white feature prints are often listed at $80 or more. Oddly enough, used color prints (whose raw stock cost would be three times as much as b&w) usually list at the relatively "cheap" going price of between $125 and $150. Why, pray tell, should I pay $89 for a b&w print of TIMBERJACK when a color print in allegedly similar condition lists for $119?

Charging "all the traffic will bear" is, of course, one of the attributes of the free enterprise system. So, somewhere,some collectors must be paying the new inflated prices. But I begin to wonder when I see, for example, WILD BRIAN KENT, a Sol Lesser turkey of 1941 starring Ralph Bellamy, which I picked up in 1956 for $19 (and was happy to get rid of a few months later for $18) now being advertised at $44. SOCIAL ERROR, an unbelievably bad "poverty row" quickie made by Commodore in 1935 did have the single redeeming factor of Dave Sharpe in the lead--long before he became Republic's top stuntman. But aside from that, the film certainly has no value today. I believe I was happy to get rid of my print for $16 in 1964. Lo and behold, it was advertised at $49 on a recent collector's "sale" list.

WAR DOGS was a 66-minute cheapie produced by Monogram as part of their contribution to the country's national defense (or so they said at the time), and, if I recall, I bought a print of it in 1957 for under $25. Recently, the film was on one collector's list under its alternate title of UNSUNG HEROES (quote:"WW2 action classic") at $55 and on another list as WAR DOGS for $39. What a difference a decade makes Those shoestring Westerns of the 1930s were a drug on the market as recently as 1965. Today, a new legion of Western buffs have driven the price of many a Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, and Charles Starrett 6-reeler sky high. LIGHTNING STRIKES WEST, a Ken Maynard Colony release from 1940 sat on my shelf for months in 1964, priced at just $22. Today, it would likely be snapped up at over $50! Many a collector of 1963-4-5 was happy to part with a LAWLESS LAND or TEXAS KID(Johnny Mack Brown) for $20. Today, these same old prints command $39 and up. And Buck Jones Westerns bring much more. There is no doubt that this situation is partly due to increasing rarity as fewer TV prints are struck, and thus there is a dwindling supply of used prints for collectors.

Lest I leave the impression that ALL film collectors are "gouging," I will quickly add that I have seen many very reasonably priced lists as well. As always, comparison shopping is the best way to buy films. For instance, BELLE LE GRAND (Vera Ralston, John Carroll) varies from $49 to $79 on three lists I have in front of me. Assuming, at those prices, the prints are of good quality, why pay $30 more? Color prints of HANNAH LEE (Macdonald Carey, Joanne Dru) may list for $119 with some dealers and $160 with others. And if the print should bear the more commercial re-release title of OUTLAW TERRITORY, it may be priced still higher. And so it goes. But as long as you "emptor your caveat," you can still fare well in the collector's market.

DARYL DAVY

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